

# Sexual Abuse

## **“We’re all the same here” Investigating the rehabilitative climate of a re-rolled sexual offender prison: A qualitative longitudinal study**

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Keywords:	rehabilitation, Sexual Offender, Prison, prison climate, qualitative longitudinal
Abstract:	<p>Understanding how individuals with sexual convictions experience prison and its environment is important because such experiences can impact on rehabilitation outcomes. This is the first qualitative longitudinal investigation that explores the experiences of prisoners in a prison exclusively for individuals with sexual convictions over time. The purpose of this research was to explore the rehabilitative and therapeutic climate of a recently re-rolled prison (a general prison turned into a prison only for individuals who have sexually offended) at two time points (T1 at re-roll and T2 a year later). The study focuses on prisoners perspectives of the purpose of the prison, experience of prison life, relationships in the prison, and the prison regime over time. Twenty interviews were conducted across the time points and revealed two main superordinate themes “‘Being’ in a prison for individuals with sexual convictions” and “obstructions to change”. This research adds to the emerging body of knowledge surrounding the importance of the wider prison environment on the rehabilitation of individuals with sexual convictions and on the benefits and risks of co-locating men who have committed sexual offences in the same prison site. It also has implications wider than rehabilitation of those convicted of sexual offences and has insights for the types of environment and prisoner-staff relationships that are conducive to rehabilitation.</p>

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Table 1 Participant, time point and treatment information

Participant	Time point 1	Time point 2	Completed Offender Programme (SOTP)	Sex Treatment	Victim Type
1	X		Treated		Adult
2	X		Untreated		Child
3	X	X	Treated		Adult
4	X	X	Untreated		Child
5	X	X	Treated		Child
6	X	X	Treated		Child
7	X	X	Treated		Child
8	X	X	Untreated		Child
9	X	X	Untreated		Child
10	X	X	Untreated		Child
11		X	Untreated		Child
12		X	Untreated		Child

Table 2 Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes
1) 'Being' in a prison for individuals with sexual convictions	2) Facilitates 'space' to change
	3) Constructive, meaningful and reciprocal relationships
2) Obstructions to change	4) Relational ambivalence
	5) Deviant Undercurrent
	6) Regime Impediments

## Introduction

The use of rehabilitative interventions for criminal offenders has expanded over the decades and with it so has evidence exploring their effectiveness in reducing recidivism (Lipton, Pearson, Cleland, & Yee, 2002). For example, although contested, research has demonstrated that through targeting specific risk factors, sex offender treatment programs can reduce the number of individuals who are reconvicted for a sexual offense (Hanson et al., 2002; Losel & Schmucker, 2005; Schmucker & Losel, 2015). Specifically, programs which take a risk-need-responsivity approach have been found to be the most successful (Hanson, Morton, Helmus, & Hodgson, 2009). However, while there is much research into the risk factors of offenders and the specific changes offenders may demonstrate throughout their treatment, there is much less examining the context or situation within which treatment takes place. The prison climate (whether therapeutic or not) and the attitudes of staff in that prison play a pivotal role in successful treatment and rehabilitation of offenders. Birgen (2004) has argued that such issues constitute an aspect of responsivity, which is both under-developed and seldom researched. Indeed, there are growing concerns that rehabilitative programs and practices are being compromised by ineffective correctional environments (Day, Casey, Vess, & Huisy, 2012; Smith, Cullen, & Latessa, 2009).

At present, little is known about prison climate and its relationship with treatment processes and especially treatment gains. Conversely, a number of features in correctional facilities have been found detrimental to therapy (Woessner & Schwedler, 2014). The context within which treatment happens has been found to be more influential than actual treatment procedures (Marshall & Marshall, 2010, Schmucker and Losel, 2015). Indeed, the empirical evidence suggests that good prison social climate, other factors being equal, likely improves the outcomes achievable through evidence-based, "What Works" rehabilitation programs (Harding, 2014). In Schmucker and Losel's (2015) meta-analysis on the effectiveness of sex offender treatment there was a significant effect for community and forensic hospitals, but not for prison. This is likely due to iatrogenic 'contamination effects' in the prison

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3 subculture e.g., a deferred transfer of learned contents to the world outside, difficulties during  
4 resettlement or the experience of the prison's climate (Schmucker & Losel, 2015). Understanding how  
5 men who have committed sexual offenses experience prison and its environment is important  
6 because such experiences can impact rehabilitation outcomes (Blagden, Winder, & Hames, 2016;  
7 Blagden et al., 2017). Evidence from the therapeutic community (TC) literature highlights the  
8 importance of context and the environment for offender rehabilitation (see e.g., Jensen & Kane, 2012;  
9 Marshall, 1997). Jensen and Kane (2012) found that completing a sentence in a TC had a significant  
10 effect on reducing the likelihood of rearrest for prisoners. Marshall (1997) conducted a large-scale  
11 evaluation of the effectiveness of TCs for men who have committed sexual offenses. In his 4-year  
12 follow-up, he found that 18% of treated offenders (with two or more previous convictions for sexual  
13 offenses) were reconvicted, compared with 43% of untreated individuals with sexual convictions. This  
14 has led some to argue that TCs, or at least environments that have an explicit therapeutic focus, are  
15 ideal for treating men who have sexually offended (Akerman, 2010; Ware, Frost, & Hoy, 2010).

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33 A key component for any prison climate would appear to be prisoner-staff interactions. Prisoner-staff  
34 relationships matter in complex ways in prison (Liebling, Price & Elliott, 1999). Such relationships  
35 mediate "what goes on" and they matter to the 'feel' of the prison. A positive prison climate will also  
36 promote and facilitate other opportunities to change outside of programs (Day et al., 2012). For  
37 example, peer-support roles in prison have been found to assist with desistance-based narratives and  
38 contribute to self-determination and 'active citizenship' (Perrin & Blagden, 2014). Indeed, 'purposeful  
39 activity' in prisons can enable offenders to make positive contributions toward their own  
40 rehabilitation (Blagden, Perrin, Smith, Gleeson, & Gillies, 2017). Enacting peer-support roles can  
41 increase the supporters' ability to reflect on their own circumstances and change their offending  
42 behaviour and lifestyles (Parkin & McKeganey, 2000; Sirdifield, 2006; Snow, 2002). It has been argued  
43 that positive attitudes and beliefs about change in prison staff and prisoners are vital for fostering  
44 effective offender rehabilitation and promoting change in offending behaviour (see e.g., Kjelsberg &  
45 Loos, 2008; Lea et al., 1999; Hogue, 1993). Thus, it is important for prison staff to have positive  
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3 attitudes towards offenders and this has also been found to facilitate and motivate offenders onto  
4 treatment (Lea et al., 1999). Lea et al. (1999) also found that professional attitudes were, at times,  
5 conflicted with those that worked with men convicted of sexual offenses. They highlighted the  
6 personal-professional dialectic in which conflict existed between officers feeling pressured to form  
7 relationships with “sex offenders” because of their professional duty and their personal ‘disgust’ and  
8 ‘disapproval’ of the offender’s crime. This they argued lead to a strong desire to avoid developing a  
9 more genuine relationship with such clients. Perhaps more alarmingly Spencer and Ricciardelli (2017)  
10 found that Canadian correctional officers had dispositionally negative attitudes towards individuals  
11 with sexual convictions, with such individuals perceived as ‘disgusting’ and ‘unworthy’ of even poor  
12 conditions of confinement.  
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26 While the broader treatment environment has received comparatively little attention, there has  
27 been some work that has focused on group or within-treatment climate. It has been argued that the  
28 location of the therapeutic intervention is a relevant issue for treatment readiness and is an aspect  
29 of external readiness in the multifactor offender readiness model (MORM) (Ward, Day, Howells &  
30 Birgden, 2004). Ward et al. (2004) argue that a pertinent location factor is whether therapy is  
31 delivered in the community or in prison. This is an example of external responsivity which is focused  
32 on the setting of treatment and staff characteristics. Staff characteristics include therapeutic alliance  
33 and other therapeutic variables that have been linked to behaviour change e.g., empathy, warmth,  
34 genuineness, respect, support, therapist's style and self-disclosure (Serran, Fernandez, Marshall and  
35 Mann, 2003). In short getting the treatment setting and staff characteristics right seems crucial for  
36 establishing a climate conducive to rehabilitation (Birgden, 2004). Beech and Hamilton-Giachritsis  
37 (2005) found therapeutic climate to relate to treatment outcome and that staff attitudes and goals  
38 have an impact on treatment effectiveness. Similarly Beech and Scott-Fordham (1997) found that  
39 the atmosphere of the treatment group had an important effect on treatment change.  
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3 Treatment satisfaction has also been considered by other researchers as a component of the group  
4 environment (Holdsworth, Bowen, Brown & Howat, 2014), an aspect of treatment suitability (an  
5 internal determinant of treatment motivation according to Drieschner, Lammers & van der Staak.,  
6 2004), related to engagement (Levenson et al., 2009). Research has found a relationship between  
7 customer satisfaction in the treatment of individuals with sexual convictions, engagement in therapy  
8 and investment in treatment goals. Offenders in treatment value the role of group therapy and find  
9 a compassionate therapeutic style by facilitators and 'good lives' concepts helpful in managing their  
10 behaviour (Levenson et al., 2009).  
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21 Given the potential impact that climate and context could have on rehabilitation, there is  
22 surprisingly little research on the experiences of such individuals in prison and how they perceive  
23 their environment (Levins & Crewe, 2015). Indeed, very little is known about the experience of  
24 individuals with sexual convictions within specialist prisons and whether these prisons are effective  
25 in producing an environment conducive to change (Woessner & Schwedler, 2014). To the authors  
26 knowledge there has also been no qualitative longitudinal study that has investigated the  
27 rehabilitative climate of a prison for individuals with sexual convictions (or any) prison over time.  
28 This study aims to explore the qualitative changes in the rehabilitative climate of a re-rolled prison  
29 (in this case a general prison turned into a prison only for individuals who have sexually offended)  
30 from just after the re-roll to a year later. The research will focus on the participants' experiences of  
31 the prison i.e., its regime and climate, prisoner-staff relationships, opportunities for personal growth  
32 and development and crucially whether these perceptions have changed over time as the prison  
33 became more established as a specialist site. Understanding such perceptions will add to current  
34 knowledge surrounding the risks and benefits associated with co-locating men who have committed  
35 sexual offenses and will illuminate the type of prison climate most conducive for the rehabilitation of  
36 men who have offended sexually. Indeed, there have been very few empirical investigations focusing  
37 on prisons which only house individuals with sexual convictions and only anecdotal evidence as to  
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3 the risks of housing individuals with sexual convictions together (e.g., collusion, increased sexual  
4 deviancy). This research has a number of overarching research questions and objectives:

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8 (1) To understand how individuals with sexual convictions experience a prison for only that client  
9 group, the challenges they face and the opportunities to change and whether such experiences  
10 change over time.  
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15 (2) To investigate the perspectives of prisoners on the purpose of the prison, its regime, and climate  
16 and whether this changes over time.  
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## 20 21 **Method**

### 22 ***Participants, recruitment and sampling***

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25 A qualitative longitudinal design is utilized to explore concepts of time and change within this research  
26 (McCoy, 2017). A total of 12 prisoners took part in 20 interviews using a qualitative longitudinal design  
27 (Erikson, Park & Tham, 2010). Participant information is detailed in table 1 including the time point  
28 they were interviewed. The age of participants in t1 ranged from 22 to 73 ( $M = 42.22, SD = 14.39$ ) and  
29 t2 ages ranged from 22 to 68 ( $M = 41.37, SD = 13.56$ ), the ages differed very slightly due to slightly  
30 different samples in each timepoint,  
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Timepoint 1 was 6 months into the re-roll and timepoint 2 was approximately a year later and just  
over 18 months after the re-roll. Time point 1 was chosen because although 6 months into the re-roll  
is early in the prison change process, it allowed enough time for the initial disruption to have settled.  
Time point 2 is a year later and 18 months into the process and so allowing enough time for systems  
and regimes to have become routine. Not all participants were able to participate in both phases due  
to the participants being transferred to other establishments or being released back into the  
community. Table 1 shows the participant, the time point they were interviewed, treatment status  
and victim type. In total 8 participants were interviewed in both phases of the research with an  
additional two participants in both time point 1 and time point 2.



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3 [Insert table 1 here]  
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6 As can be noted five participants had completed the sex offender treatment program (SOTP) Core  
7 version, which was a prison-based cognitive-behavioural program for medium-high risk individuals  
8 with sexual convictions (see Beech et al., 2005). However, no further program information was  
9 available to the authors at time of data collecting and so it is possible the 'untreated' individuals had  
10 done non-offense specific interventions. The sample was predominately child offenders, who typically  
11 occupy the lowest rung of the prison hierarchy and are the most denigrated group (Schwabebe, 2005).  
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20 The chosen site for the longitudinal research was a medium-secure prison which had re-rolled into a  
21 prison which was exclusively for individuals with sexual convictions, though the security category of  
22 the prison remained unchanged. When a prison re-rolls it effectively becomes a clean slate for  
23 establishing a new prison regime and so makes it an ideal site to understand and track changes in a  
24 prison's climate. The re-roll prison is operationally no different from other medium-secure prisons,  
25 the only difference is that it is now exclusively for individuals with sexual convictions. The staff  
26 received minimal extra training, but were given the option to move prisons if they did not want to  
27 work with the client group. A small percentage of staff left and so some of the findings presented here  
28 may be explained by the self-selecting staff members who stayed.  
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41 It should be noted that a qualitative study comprising of 20 interviews is considered large in qualitative  
42 research (Willig 2008). All interviews in this research were semi-structured and lasted between 60 and  
43 90 minutes. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to discuss issues of central concern to  
44 both themselves and the research topic. This interviewing style is flexible and allows participants the  
45 freedom to elaborate on personally important issues. In order to facilitate discussion, all questions  
46 were kept open (Knight, Wykes, & Hayward, 2003). This style of interviewing also enables "rapport to  
47 be developed; allows participants to think, speak and be heard; and are well suited to in-depth and  
48 personal discussion" (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005 pg. 22). As this research used in-depth interviews  
49 at two different time points, steps were taken to minimize researcher bias. Firstly, questions were  
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3 designed to be non-directive, allowing participants to describe their experience in their own words  
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5 without the views of the researcher imposed on them. In addition, participants' own words are used  
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7 to describe the phenomena of this investigation (Phillips & Lindsay, 2011).  
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10 The interviews focused on the following areas and were broadly similar for both time points.  
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- 13 • Purpose of the prison, experience of prison life, relationships in the prison, and the regime
  - 14 • Rehabilitative ideals/orientation of the prison
  - 15 • Opportunities for personal development and access to constructive outlets for prisoners.
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### 23 ***Qualitative Data Analysis***

24 The data were analysed using a phenomenologically oriented strand of thematic analysis, as described  
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26 by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis has been described as a 'contextualist method', sitting  
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28 between the two poles of constructionism and realism. This position thus acknowledges the ways in  
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30 which individuals make meaning of their experience, and in turn, the ways in which the broader social  
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32 context impinges on those meanings. As such, thematic analyses are seen as reflecting 'reality' (Braun  
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34 & Clarke 2006). The phenomenological focus of this thematic analysis means that it is concerned with  
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36 the meanings that particular experiences, events, and states hold for participants (Smith & Eatough,  
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38 2007).  
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46 The analysis adhered to the principles of qualitative thematic analysis as outlined by Miles and  
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48 Huberman (1994). Data analysis commenced with detailed readings of all the transcripts, and then  
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50 initial coding of emergent themes. A process of sorting initial patterns then took place, and this was  
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52 followed by the identification and the interpretation of meaningful patterns in the data (Miles &  
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54 Huberman 1994). Data were coded in three stages: Data from time point 1 was coded first; then data  
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56 from time point 2; followed by a process of coding across the two time points (McCoy, 2017). The data  
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58 was organized systematically across the two time points and themes were identified and reviewed.  
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3 The final themes were representative of the sample as a whole across time point 1 and time point 2.  
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5 A form of inter-rater reliability was performed on the data, which involved the analysis being 'audited'  
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7 (Lincoln & Guba 1985 as cited in Seale, 1999:467) by the co-author as well as an independent  
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9 researcher. This process ensured that the interpretations had validity. This process involves checking  
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11 the interpretations of the data by consulting other colleagues/researchers (Willig, 2008). The authors  
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13 and a researcher not involved in the project, independently analysed sections of transcripts and then  
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15 shared coding and themes in data analysis sessions with all members present to ensure that similar  
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17 codes and themes were emerging from the data. McCoy (2017) argues that a longitudinal design aligns  
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19 well with the epistemological and ontological foundations of qualitative methods such as thematic  
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21 analysis and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). The main distinguishing feature of a  
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23 qualitative longitudinal approach is that temporality is embedded into the research process making  
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25 change a central focus of analytical attention (Thomson & Holland, 2003).  
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### 34 **Analysis and Discussion**

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36 When performing qualitative analysis, particularly in-depth analysis focusing on participant  
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38 experiences, the task is to identify the underlying principles that organize the thinking of the  
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40 participants, and thus, the structures that influence perceptions, feelings, and behaviour (Skrapec,  
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42 2001). The experiences and structures relating to how participants perceived the prison's climate  
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44 over time in this study are represented in the two superordinate themes and inclusive subordinate  
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46 themes presented in Table 2.  
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54 [Insert table 2 here]

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59 Here the superordinate and subordinate themes will be unpacked, analysed and discussed.  
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## **Superordinate Theme 1: 'Being' in a prison for individuals with sexual convictions**

The crux of this superordinate theme is the experience of a prison that only caters for individuals with sexual convictions and how experiencing this environment was unlike any other prison. For some it was described as "a different world". Participants spoke of greater headspace and reduction in anxiety and fear (Blagden et al., 2016). The reduction in anxiety and greater headspace appeared to promote individuals in thinking about personal change and development and these appeared to be facilitated by the prison. Related to this was how the participants' were construing staff relationships that, while not without issue, appeared more constructive (from both prisoner and staff perspective). Thus the two subordinate themes within this theme that will be unpacked are "facilitates 'space' to change" and "Constructive, meaningful and reciprocal relationships".

### **Subordinate Theme 1: Facilitates 'space' to change**

This notion of 'space' recurs frequently throughout interviews within both time points. The emotional geography of an environment dictates the level of acceptance of behaviours and emotions expressed by those within it, influencing how individuals exist within that space. Conventional prison environments require masculine 'fronts' to be employed as a strategy of survival, with expression of emotions not typical of 'masculinity' being a show of weakness (Crewe et al., 2014). Throughout the interviews prisoners spoke about how 'space' is construed in a prison for individuals with sexual convictions and what this means for the participants.

Extract 1, T2, participant 5

The purpose of this place I would say is rehabilitation, it gave me that space to show it...here gives you that space to work on it. I was like full 100% denial and in that environment, I completely shut down and I think I've come here and in the space of roughly 10 months I went from being in denial to changing my perspective and saying yes to programs...there's the space to have that internal reflection to go, wow what is going on? What am I doing? There

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3 was that space where I could speak to my mum and say listen this is where I'm at, this is what  
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5 I'm thinking, this is the truth, I've done this... And to have that space where, when you're  
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7 relaxed it's just a whole different world. I am not under stress in terms of general stress, just  
8  
9 background stress, everyday dealing with stuff, that has been brought down and as a result,  
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12 I'm able to move forward  
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15 Here the participant articulates how the environment created space for internal reflection and it was  
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17 through this reflection that personal change began to occur. While all participants were clear that the  
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19 purpose of the prison was for "rehabilitation", it was the 'space' it created which helped facilitate  
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21 reflection. Participants were clear in all time points that being in an exclusively male sex offenders  
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23 prison meant they were no longer in survival mode fending off physical and psychological assaults.  
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25 Blagden et al. (2016) have tagged this type of internal reflection "headspace," and have suggested  
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27 that it is crucial in enabling offenders to self-evaluate and discover that change is possible and  
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29 desirable. Previous research has found that feeling safe and having anxieties reduced allows for  
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31 "headspace" to think and reflect on the self and the self in transition (self in relation to past and future  
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33 selves) and the changes individuals want to make.  
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38 As can be noted, facilitating 'space' to change is conducive to creating an environment where  
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40 prisoners feel safe and less anxious. In their study Ricciardelli & Moir (2013) reported that in  
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42 mainstream prisons individuals with sexual convictions often feel unsafe and under constant threat  
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44 from other prisoners. In extract 2 the participant describes feeling safer than in previous prisons, and  
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46 goes on to state that the new environment has enabled him to contemplate change.  
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50 Extract 2 T2 Participant 12

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53 Feeling safe has helped me to want to better myself. In the last prison I was frightened to  
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55 come out my cell or when I did... I got attacked...I feel really safe in this environment.  
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3 Feeling relaxed and at ease appears to be an important element for a rehabilitative climate for prisons  
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5 that house individuals with sexual convictions, and this is in line with Woessner and Schwendler's  
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7 (2014) study that concluded that effective treatment can only occur in an environment where inmates  
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9 feel safe and supported. Ugelvik (2012) emphasizes the importance of the prison as a rehabilitative  
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11 environment, as this impacts the prisoners' ability to 'reconstruct themselves as moral subjects'  
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13 (Ugelvik, 2012, pg. 217).  
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17 Extract 3 T1 participant 6  
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20 Yeah you sort of erm, you forget your crime basically, in a way, you don't get reminded of it  
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22 all the time and think, you don't feel like, you haven't got the people shouting at you all the  
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24 time. No one talks about their offenses on the wing its just you don't have to listen to the  
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26 [other] prisoners basically, shouting the things they'd shout  
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30 Extract 4 T2 participant 6  
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33 There's a sorta fight club rule, you know,...you don't talk about it...it's sorta an unwritten rule  
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35 you don't go into detail about offenses, you won't see guys or at least I haven't seen it, who  
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37 play pool and are talking about offenses...you're not having to hide from anyone or getting  
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39 stuff said to you. It's just like chatting, chatting about stuff...really err normal stuff  
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42 Participant 6's temporal consistency highlights how all prisoners are, in the main, seen equally and  
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44 that the division of the prisoner hierarchy is not a prominent feature of the prison. There is a sense  
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46 of relief in extracts 3 and 4 where participants experience less anxiety through not having to hide  
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48 aspects of their offense, engage in normal social interaction without fear of reprisal and through this  
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50 process it allows them to distance themselves from their crimes and the label 'sex offender'. In the  
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52 traditional prison (where individuals with sexual convictions and all other types of offenders are  
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54 housed together) the insults of other prisoners are a constant reminder to individuals with sexual  
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56 convictions of their label, and with it the stigmatisation (levins & Crewe, 2015). The looking-glass self  
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3 postulates that how people define themselves is a reflection and reaction to how others perceive  
4 them and is highly relevant to the prison environment. This is particularly potent for individuals with  
5 sexual convictions where reflections from others can be mediated by their own pre-existing self-views  
6 (Cioffi, 2003), which are often characterized by feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem. As Cioffi  
7 (2003:211) argues, “the looking-glass stands not before a single social reflection, but in a veritable hall  
8 of mirrors”. Through being labelled a ‘sex offender’ they are not only condemned for their acts, but  
9 are given an aberrant identity, where their offense is viewed as a central part of who they are (Gigard,  
10 2010, Goffman, 1963). For prisoners the deprivation of moral status can be more painful than the  
11 other pains and deficits of incarceration (Ivins & Crewe, 2015). Therefore through feelings of safety  
12 created by the prison environment the participant is able to begin, or at least contemplate, more  
13 positive self-identities.  
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28 It may seem ironic that while surrounded by prisoners with sexual convictions, one can construct a  
29 self that can disassociate from the dispreferred identity. However, it appears that the very nature of  
30 being surrounded by other individuals with sexual convictions facilitates this process. There is a  
31 recognition everyone is the ‘same’, there is an almost unwritten rule that you do not speak about your  
32 offenses unless necessary. This can result in high instances of denial which in turn can make prisoners  
33 less likely to discuss their offense whilst actively dissociating from sex offender identities/labels. While  
34 some may argue that the presence of denial or normalized social interaction is inherently negative or  
35 is an illusion, such a position negates the positives that denial and distance from sex offender labels  
36 can bring. Denial in individuals with sexual convictions is not related to recidivism, but instead to can  
37 facilitate the enactment of the positive self. Adversely the acceptance and internalisation of sexual  
38 offender labels can lead to an impairment in the self-change process (Blagden et al., 2014; Maruna,  
39 2009; Ware & Mann, 2012).  
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## 56 **Subordinate Theme 2: Constructive, Meaningful and Reciprocal relationships**

57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 Across both time points there was consensus amongst the participants that the relationships  
4  
5 between prisoners and staff were largely constructive and that they allowed for a unique living  
6  
7 experience. A seemingly key component in a prison's climate is the relationship between prisoner  
8  
9 and staff (Blagden, Winder, & Hames, 2016; Schalast, Redies, Collins, Stacey, & Howells, 2008).  
10  
11 Previous studies have reported strained relationships between individuals with sexual convictions  
12  
13 and staff members, with stigmatisation by staff resulting in negative treatment (Schwaebe, 2005;  
14  
15 Spencer, 2009). However, this was largely unfounded in the two time points and it appeared that  
16  
17 reductions in anxiety and wider prison disturbance (acts of violence etc.,) were having benefits for  
18  
19 both prisoners and staff.  
20  
21  
22

23  
24 Extract 5 T1 Participant 5

25  
26  
27 Have I really come from that world to this? It really is a different world to what I've  
28  
29 experienced before  
30  
31

32 Extract 6 T1 Prisoner Participant 4

33  
34  
35 Then when you came on the wing. Yer they're all helping ya this that and the other. And  
36  
37 then I was sat down at one of the tables, just on me own, and an officer came and sat at the  
38  
39 other side of the table and said "how you doing Mr (name removed), everything alright?"  
40  
41 And I's just like blown away, because err you didn't get that at [xxx], that were no, they'd  
42  
43 treat you like shit.  
44  
45

46  
47 Staff associating with prisoners, addressing prisoners by first name, and exchanging pleasantries  
48  
49 were perceived as unusual. Extract 6 illustrates the surprise at being treated in a decent manner and  
50  
51 being "blown away" at how qualitatively different this experience was from previous establishments.  
52  
53 Many participants made comparisons to life in previous prisons to highlight how different staff-  
54  
55 prisoner relations are in this prison.  
56  
57

58 Extract 7 T1 Prisoner Participant 2  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 I was asked quite politely “Would you like?” and that was the big thing “Would I like?” erm it  
4 gives me the decision to make y’know without any pressure or nothing “Would you like?”  
5  
6  
7 and because of that I believe that made me more prone to want to engage  
8  
9

10 Extract 7 highlights how prisoner and staff interactions were qualitatively different from previous  
11 experiences exemplified in this case by being given a choice, some degree of autonomy and control.  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

18 Extract 8 T1 Participant 7  
19

20  
21 I just went wow...you’re talking to me like I was just a normal person, not a prisoner...and  
22 that helps, made me feel a bit better. It were weird [sic] just being treated normal.  
23  
24  
25

26 Again in time point 1, just after re-roll, the majority of participants felt that prisoner and staff  
27 relationships were positive and the environment was unlike any they had experienced previously.  
28  
29 Participants’ narratives across both time points provide evidence of staff-prisoner interactions that  
30 are not just superficial, but that there is scope for real transformative interactions.  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

36 Extract 9 T2 participant 7  
37

38  
39 I think the staff and prisoner relationship, yeah, is for me personally one of the  
40 reasons I was able to do programs. There’s been times when I’ve been able to just  
41 open up, in a way I would never have been able to thought possible when I was at  
42 (non-specialist prison), you know talking about how I feel inside, my emotions,  
43 these are like, councillor little types of conversation we’re having so, it’s a positive  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50

51 Participant 7, who in timepoint 1 had described being treated “normally” by prison staff, had  
52 maintained a consistent view of prisoner-staff relationships through his interactions with staff. Here  
53 participant 7 is attributing his ability to successfully complete his programs as due, in part, to being  
54 able to “open up” with officers, which allowed for ‘councillor type conversations’. This staff-prisoner  
55 dynamic facilitated a constructive and meaningful interaction that was able to serve a much wider  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 purpose. For this individual the experience of feeling able to speak openly and honestly to an officer,  
4  
5 expressing his thoughts and feelings and receiving feedback, contributed to his readiness to complete  
6  
7 with programs. In this way, this deeper level of interaction appears to act as a safety valve, allowing  
8  
9 prisoners a safe and supportive outlet for their thoughts and feelings within the wider prison  
10  
11 environment. This type of meaningful interaction between officer and prisoner is akin to the aims of  
12  
13 'Five minute intervention' (Tate, Blagden and Mann, 2018) in which officers are encouraged to make  
14  
15 even brief day-to-day interactions with prisoners constructive and meaningful. In line with this  
16  
17 intervention, it appears officers are being construed by the participants as 'rehabilitative officers'  
18  
19 (Kenny and Webster, 2015). This is an encouraging and also extremely important finding as prison staff  
20  
21 who have positive attitudes towards offenders have been found to facilitate and motivate offenders  
22  
23 onto treatment (Lea et al., 1999), as the data supports in this theme. Furthermore, the data here are  
24  
25 important for understanding the mechanisms of a positive rehabilitative climate, as staff drift or  
26  
27 ambivalence may interfere with rehabilitative goals (Schalast et al., 2008). This is again exemplified in  
28  
29 extract 10 at time point 2.  
30  
31  
32  
33

34  
35 Extract 10 T2 Participant 4  
36

37  
38 One of the most important times for me in prison was about 2 months after  
39  
40 programs, an officer who had known me since I came here and had seen me go  
41  
42 through all these changes and she just said to me completely out of the blue,  
43  
44 'so...did you do it" and it was like a train had hit me, because somebody I had  
45  
46 trusted, we had joked we had laughed and it had come to this crunch point where  
47  
48 she knows I have done programs and I could either hide or actually try and  
49  
50 implement the things I've learnt so I took a breath and said yeah I have done it, this  
51  
52 is what I've done. It was a prison officer on my wing and to have that, that was like  
53  
54 wow, it was amazing because after that she said 'you know what, I respect you  
55  
56 more' and having that feedback like I say, I can't put a price on it.  
57  
58  
59  
60

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5  
6 Participant 4, who in time point 1 had been “blown away” by how he had been treated by staff,  
7  
8 discusses a post-treatment interaction with another officer on his wing, demonstrating further the  
9  
10 depth of rehabilitative potential within staff-prisoner interactions. The participant singles this out as  
11  
12 “one of the most important moments” during his sentence in that a conversation with an officer  
13  
14 allowed him to implement an aspect he had worked on during program completion. Having this  
15  
16 reflected back and validated by an officer whom the participant trusted had a profound effect on the  
17  
18 participant and again is evidence of staff-prisoner interactions fulfilling a much more constructive  
19  
20 purpose in terms of offender rehabilitation. This is not to say that all staff engaged in this way, nor  
21  
22 that all relationships were changed, but rather highlights the transformative potential such  
23  
24 interactions can have on prisoners. Indeed, this kind of relationship has been found to be important  
25  
26 in the desistance process where establishing social relationships is seen as vital to the triggering,  
27  
28 enabling, and sustaining of change (Weaver 2013). This process of positive feedback and validation is  
29  
30 an important aspect of the desistance literature in that high expectations of an individual, produce  
31  
32 higher outcomes known as the Pygmalion effect (Maruna et al., 2009; Lebel et al., 2008).  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

### 38 **Superordinate Theme 2: Obstructions to change**

39  
40  
41 While the previous superordinate theme highlighted how the environment and how housing  
42  
43 individuals with sexual convictions had some inherent positives in terms of reducing anxiety and  
44  
45 helping to focus on change, the second superordinate theme highlights some of the obstructions or  
46  
47 impediments to change. While there has only been anecdotal evidence that housing individuals with  
48  
49 sexual convictions will promote deviancy, it was a theme, albeit minor, within the data. It also  
50  
51 highlights how relational ambivalence, the professional-personal disjunction that staff may be  
52  
53 experiencing, effects broader prisoner-staff relationships. Finally, a further key aspect of this  
54  
55 superordinate theme is how blocks and strictness within the prison regime can contribute to the  
56  
57 negative experience of the prison environment.  
58  
59  
60

### Subordinate Theme 3: Relational ambivalence

Interestingly, while the majority of participants were positive regarding staff and prisoner relationships with the last theme highlighting instances of authenticity in these relationships, this was not wholly uniform and aspects of prisoner-staff relationships were still contested.

Extract 11, T1 Participant 9

it's just the staff just need to be themselves and if you can give it, be ready to take it, that's all but don't make somebody feel bad about themselves by pretending that you're there for them but you're not...sometimes it feels like they are just putting on a front putting on a show.

Extract 12 T1 Participant 3

But since we re-rolled, things have gone downhill, like officers don't want to work with us, you understand don't you, they've got families themselves and then they're coming in here listening to stories of this that and the other... I don't know how much you know but, when the prison re-rolled 47 prison officers left instantly, they went don't want sex offenders and they left, and then people were recruited

In the above extracts, the participants suspected that staff were only acting decent to put on a front and portray the prison in a positive light to the outside world. One prisoner (Prisoner Participant 9) described this as staff "putting on a show". The authenticity of prisoner-staff relations has been discussed in previous research and it is acknowledged that both prisoners and staff may forge artificial relationships out of self-interest (Crewe, 2011). Similarly, for prisoners who are used to a more hostile climate, as was the case for many of the prisoner participants in this study, it can be harder to overcome the levels of mistrust they developed in those environments (Crewe, 2011). A study from Lea, Auburn, and Kibblewhite (1999) found that prison professionals' attitudes were, at

1  
2  
3 times, in conflict and was labelled the professional–personal dialectical. This conflict stemmed from  
4  
5 prison officers feeling pressured to form a bond with men who had committed sexual offenses as  
6  
7 part of their professional duties, despite suffering internal conflict due to personal “disgust” and  
8  
9 “disapproval” of their crimes.  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

18  
19 Extract 13 T2 Participant 3

20  
21 But I would say 98% of the staff are great here and I'm amazed how good they are bearing in  
22  
23 mind some of our crimes. Erm because I had the same opinion about sex offenders before I  
24  
25 became one. Erm so I'm definitely on the other side of the fence now and err I'm amazed  
26  
27 how many women are here because again before I came into prison I just presumed it was  
28  
29 all blokes...I've just started doing a little bit of algebra with my maths teacher, I mean the  
30  
31 education staff are fantastic.  
32  
33  
34

35  
36 However, the relational ambivalence was not necessarily consistent. Here participant 3's data  
37  
38 demonstrates a shift in stance from timepoint 1 where relationships were “going downhill” in the re-  
39  
40 roll, but a more positive outlook in time point 2. The theme of relational ambivalence in a sexual  
41  
42 offender's prison demonstrates the complexity of relationships within such prisons.  
43  
44

45  
46 Extract 14 T2 Participant 9

47  
48 but yeah you know what I mean, yeah some seem to take that care about you like and  
49  
50 wonder how you get on but some of them just go about their daily job and that's it like,  
51  
52 banging you up, sorting your enquiries out and that like and then that's basically it, you  
53  
54 know what I mean.  
55  
56

57  
58 In time point 2 there were fewer data on relational ambivalence i.e., officers not wanting to interact  
59  
60 with individuals due to them being 'sexual offenders. This seemed more salient for time point 1,

1  
2  
3 perhaps understandably during the re-roll of prison and the exiting of a large proportion of prison  
4 staff. However, as extract 14 highlights some prisoner officers were construed as just “doing a job”  
5  
6  
7 or doing it to “pay their mortgage” and this gave rise to constructions of some officers as  
8  
9  
10 ‘procedural’, they “do a job”, but who are not invested in wider rehabilitative goals.  
11  
12  
13  
14  
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18

#### 19 **Subordinate Theme 4: Deviant undercurrent**

20  
21  
22 One of the potential risks of co-locating individuals with sexual convictions is creating an environment  
23  
24 in which sexually atypical behaviour becomes normalized through aberrant peer reinforcement and  
25  
26 shared experiences. As the previous themes have uncovered there was minimal discussion of offenses,  
27  
28 at least overtly, however the data pointed towards a minority of prisoners engaging in overtly atypical  
29  
30 sexual discussions, particularly at time point 1.  
31  
32  
33

34 Extract 15 T1 Participant 1

35  
36  
37 It’s openly talking on the unit...but just say you were a prisoner, we're talking in the unit, “yeah  
38  
39 when I dragged her in the bush, whipped them trousers down, give it to her”, and you're like  
40  
41 “yeah, yeah I was the same, but I knocked her head first”. That’s an open discussion on the  
42  
43 unit, in the dinner queue; the officers don’t do nothing... [prisoners] they’re getting off on it  
44  
45

46 Extract 16 T1

47  
48  
49 There’s a bit sexualized atmosphere, some guys talking shit about their offenses, there’s guys  
50  
51 having sex, grooming, it goes on, you know when we walked past them [on way to interview],  
52  
53 I know they were thinking if he was in here he’d be a target, he’d do well [reference made to  
54  
55 male interviewer]  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 Extract 15 and 16 describes experiences in time point 1 of a more sexualized environment where  
4 details of offenses are shared for sexual gratification and where instances of grooming occur. This  
5  
6  
7 points to a more subversive side of housing all individuals with sexual convictions together, which is  
8  
9  
10 facilitated by the lack of violence and aggression in prisons for individuals with sexual convictions as  
11  
12 compared to general prisons (Ievins & Crewe, 2015). In such environments staff members may  
13  
14 become more complacent in their role, as the dangers from this client group are less overt (Blagden  
15  
16 & Perrin, 2016). Being in such an environment also seemed to magnify certain interactions.  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

22  
23 Extract 17 T2 Participant 11  
24

25 what really gets annoying is, for me, I made that change from 'old' to 'new' me and then to  
26  
27 still have to listen to really negative connotations about a female officer and you think to  
28  
29 yourself like, that's somebody's sister or somebody's daughter. You wouldn't want yours  
30  
31 spoken about that way and erm, which is annoying and kind of makes you think, for me it just  
32  
33 makes me think I don't ever want to end up like that again so it's a stark reminder.  
34  
35  
36

37 This extract reveals a tension between wanting to enact a new self, whilst the surrounding  
38  
39 environment acts to remind him of the old self. Here the derogatory comments made about a female  
40  
41 member of staff act as a 'stark reminder' of the contrast between the 'old me' and the 'new me'. The  
42  
43 'reminder' is a motivational one as it highlights the 'feared self' and a desire to not want to revert to  
44  
45 their old self (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009).  
46  
47  
48

49 However, this deviant undercurrent seemed to have largely disappeared by time point 2 and was only  
50  
51 explicitly mentioned in one interview (see extract 17).  
52  
53

54 Extract 18 T2 Participant 6  
55

56  
57 If it does happen it's not in your face, you don't see it, I've not experienced it to be honest...  
58  
59

60 Extract 19 T2 Participant 12

1  
2  
3 People don't really talk about it, don't really want to talk about it, because you don't want to  
4  
5 be judged, you know what I mean, so people generally don't talk about it  
6  
7

8 Extracts 18 and 19 highlight how a deviant undercurrent/environment is not widely experienced by  
9  
10 participants, particularly in time point 2. Whilst there appeared to be an issue of sexualising the  
11  
12 environment, this was perhaps unexpectedly minor given the client group and by time point 2 did not  
13  
14 appear from the data to be a problematic feature of the prison. It has been suggested that when  
15  
16 individuals with sexual convictions are separated from mainstream prisoners they resort to the  
17  
18 'pluralistic ignorance of each other's misdeeds' (Priestley, 1980: 67). However, the data here does not  
19  
20 support such an argument as prisoners were not ignorant of each other's behaviour, but chose not to  
21  
22 discuss it to create a more normalized prison environment where everyone knew what each other  
23  
24 was in for and so it did not need articulating. As with previous analysis of 'space' and hierarchy, this  
25  
26 may be a positive feature as it mitigates against an overly sexualized environment and allows people  
27  
28 to move away from sexual offender labels, which can deleteriously effect self-identity.  
29  
30  
31

### 32 33 **Subordinate Theme 5: Regime impediments** 34

35  
36 While the environment was construed by participants as safe and secure and by some as an  
37  
38 environment that can assist with facilitating change, there did appear to be features of the prison  
39  
40 regime that could be construed as interfering with this process. The data highlighted that there were  
41  
42 impediments to the change process, which largely focused around the regime.  
43  
44  
45

46 Extract 20 T1 Participant 3

47  
48 It's got a lot stricter since the re-roll, they keep changing their minds too, one minute you can  
49  
50 have something and then you can't  
51

52  
53 Extract 21, T2, Participant 9

54  
55  
56 Over a period since re-rolling now it's been like tens upon tens of these rules and  
57  
58 it really gets tiresome because it's not things that you're asking a lot for, you're  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 asking for a pair of shoes you're not asking for a day out and then that's where I  
4  
5 think they've gotten it wrong. This is what we don't understand like, when the  
6  
7 staff were being spat upon, assaulted, swore at, they [previous prisoners] treated  
8  
9 them better than now. They hardly get any [disturbance] and they treat us worse.  
10  
11 It's the policies that show more than anything, the distinction between how a sex  
12  
13 offender is treated and a mains [prisoner is treated]. They could bring in almost  
14  
15 any rules in because the guys are either in my position, reliant upon parole, so  
16  
17 you're between a rock and a hard place. It is annoying, it's one of those things that  
18  
19 you have to deal with because it comes from the stigma of being a sex offender  
20  
21 or being in a VP (vulnerable prisoner) prison, these things are going to happen.  
22  
23  
24  
25

26 The grievances articulated in extracts 20 and 21 regarding rule changes and strict rules remained fairly  
27  
28 consistent between the two time points. Participants in both time points felt the rules of the prison  
29  
30 were stricter and in some senses more unpredictable due to it being a prison for individuals with sexual  
31  
32 convictions. Several participants articulated the sentiments put forward in extracts 20 and 21, that the  
33  
34 rules are put in because they are a passive population and unlikely to revolt against any decisions and  
35  
36 how they were viewed in comparison to a 'mains' prisoner (a non-sex offending prisoner). This belief  
37  
38 was, or had the potential to, undermine some of the positive effects that the prison was creating.  
39  
40  
41

42 Extract 22 T2 Participant 3  
43

44  
45 There's all these rules, one minute we're allowed something, then we're not, security seems  
46  
47 much tighter and it takes ages to get stuff...I'd like to see some of the rules changed, just little  
48  
49 things... we're not allowed pegs on the walls that hang clothes and things up. Just little things  
50  
51 like that I think I'd changed cus' I don't see the point of it...you do think is it because we're sex  
52  
53 offenders.  
54  
55  
56

57 This extract again exemplifies that the construal of the regime as a possible impediment to change for  
58  
59 some participants. It may be that the rule changes e.g., "allowing pegs" etc., are legitimate rules, but  
60

1  
2  
3 they are clearly not being effectively communicated and this is causing some to question if it due to  
4  
5 them being “sex offenders”.  
6  
7

## 8 9 **Summary**

10  
11  
12 This study is the first qualitative longitudinal study which has explored the rehabilitative climate of a  
13  
14 sexual offender’s prison. Time point 1 was just as the re-roll of the prison had finished and ideal marker  
15  
16 for longitudinal study. Time point 2 was approximately a year into the re-roll. The aim of this study  
17  
18 was to investigate the rehabilitative climate of a prison for individuals with sexual convictions over  
19  
20 time and to explore prisoners’ perceptions of the environment, the prison regime, prisoner-staff  
21  
22 relationships, opportunities for change and personal growth and how the prison may facilitate this  
23  
24 process. There were strong themes of experiencing a positive prison climate where prisoners felt safe  
25  
26 and secure as well as experiencing positive and meaningful prisoner-staff relationships. However, not  
27  
28 all aspects of the prison were experienced uniformly as positive, and they included some aspects of  
29  
30 the regime, a deviant undercurrent and relational ambivalence which threatened to impede personal  
31  
32 change.  
33  
34  
35

36  
37 In traditional prison settings, individuals with sexual convictions are often isolated on ‘VP’  
38  
39 (vulnerable prisoner) wings for their own protection which leads to anxiety provoking feelings, as  
40  
41 often they feel unsafe and constantly victimized in traditional prison settings (Ricciardelli and Moir,  
42  
43 2013). However, the qualitative longitudinal exploration of a re-roll prison has found that such fears  
44  
45 largely do not exist in all male sexual offender prisons. All participants expressed that they were  
46  
47 experiencing this prison as a “different world”, one in which they were less anxious and less fearful  
48  
49 of being identified as a “sexual offender” and this was consistent between the time points.  
50  
51

52  
53 Consequently, they felt safer in their prison environment. This was an important finding, as research  
54  
55 has found that prisoners who feel safe are more likely to secure meaningful roles throughout  
56  
57 incarceration and more likely to engage in treatment and other pro-social activity (Blagden & Perrin,  
58  
59 2016; Perrin & Blagden, 2014). The new environment also appeared to facilitate headspace, a form  
60

1  
2  
3 of self-reflection that enabled prisoners to process where they are and where they want to go. This  
4  
5 seems crucial as often individuals with sexual convictions feel threatened, anxious, and have to  
6  
7 adapt their identities to survive prison and consequently do not engage in this reflective process  
8  
9  
10 (Schwaebe, 2005). These findings sit in contrast to a broad body of research exploring traditional  
11  
12 correctional settings where those who have committed sexual offenses live under constant fear of  
13  
14 attack and are often unable to address their offending behaviour in a safe and constructive  
15  
16 environment (Blagden & Perrin, 2016; Schwaebe, 2005). This feeling of experiencing a different  
17  
18 environment appears to be especially important for men who have committed sexual offenses, who  
19  
20 often experience multiple stigmas that inhibit their personal change processes (and can lead to  
21  
22 treatment refusal) (Mann, Webster, Wakeling, & Keylock, 2013).  
23  
24  
25

26 The prison environment is often described by offenders as 'fake' and the relationship between the  
27  
28 offender and prison-officer as 'artificial' (Leibling et al., 2011). This raises the question of whether  
29  
30 relationships on prison wings can ever be authentic (Crewe 2011). While, this study would not  
31  
32 entirely disagree with such arguments, the study does provide evidence of reciprocal exchanges and  
33  
34 instances that could be characterized as genuine. These meaningful instances appear to have the  
35  
36 potential for massive transformative effects. The relational dynamics between prisoners and staff  
37  
38 are likely important in the desistance process as they can allow for recognition, validation and  
39  
40 reflection of personal change and establishing the importance of such social relationships in  
41  
42 triggering, enabling, and sustaining change (Weaver 2013). There was a largely positive construal of  
43  
44 prisoner-staff relationships and this is important as prison officers who are detached hold more  
45  
46 punitive attitudes toward prisoners (Dirkzwager & Kruttschnitt, 2012). While there was aspects of  
47  
48 relational ambivalence, participants were largely positive of such relationships. Such relationships  
49  
50 could be considered "light" (as opposed to "heavy" or oppressive) and are characterized by prisoners  
51  
52 feeling they are respected and that prison staff are approachable, relaxed, and cooperative (Crewe,  
53  
54 2011). The expectations and beliefs of prison staff about prisoners are important. There is consistent  
55  
56 research on the pygmalion effects and interpersonal expectancy effects on prisoner outcome (LeBel  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 et al., 2008). Maruna et al. (2009) argued that the pygmalion effect (high expectation produces  
4 higher outcome) is important for offender rehabilitation: specifically that self-change occurs not only  
5 through self-appraisals and attributions but also from the reactions and reflected appraisals of  
6 others.  
7  
8  
9

10  
11  
12 The notion of 'good' prison-staff relationships is a seemingly fluid concept and the relational  
13 boundaries need to be constantly checked. For example 'going native' or being 'too soft' (or even  
14 perceived to be too soft) runs the risk of not being in control (Crawley & Crawley, 2008) and for many  
15 prison officers a good relationship remains one of control, security and maintaining order (Crawley,  
16 2004; Ricciardelli, 2014). However, 'good' or perhaps rather 'meaningful' relationships have been  
17 found within prisons (see Blagden et al., 2016; Liebling, 2011) and this study provides further evidence  
18 of this possibility. The notion of meaningful relationships, or at the very least, meaningful exchanges  
19 is a clear theme in this current research. While these seem to be characterized by some aspect of  
20 reciprocity, it appears that the prison environment is a vital component in whether these relationships  
21 can be fostered. In harsh prison environments, with high degrees of violence and disturbance, and  
22 suspicion in prisoner-staff relationships, such relationships are unlikely to flourish.  
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38 There are challenges to housing individuals with sexual convictions in prison and these have relational  
39 and practical considerations. One aspect appears to be the potential for a deviant undercurrent or  
40 sub-community. There was evidence for this in time point 1, though it appeared to have reduced at  
41 time point 2. Such an undercurrent has the potential to interfere with positive personal growth and  
42 undermine the rehabilitative climate of the prison. The other challenge is perceived prison  
43 impediments. Some participants construed the regime in the prison as unnecessarily restrictive due  
44 to it being a prison for individuals with sexual convictions. Whether this is accurate or not, clearer and  
45 more effective communication in prison rules (or changes to them) may mitigate against possible  
46 unrest.  
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## Conclusion

A prison's climate is a potentially vital "responsivity" factor for an offender's rehabilitation and so getting the treatment setting and staff characteristics right is crucial for establishing an effective rehabilitative environment (Birgen, 2004). This links with the 'person, program, and context' factors of responsivity in the multifactor offender readiness model, specifically regarding the importance of the setting of treatment and staff characteristics (Ward et al., 2004). This research has added to the emerging body of knowledge surrounding the importance of the wider prison environment on sexual offender rehabilitation and on the benefits and risks of co-locating men who have committed sexual offenses in the same prison site. It also has implications wider than sexual offender prisons and has insights for the types of environment that are conducive to rehabilitation. It may be that environments such as this prison where individuals with sexual convictions are co-located are the most conducive to treatment engagement (see Ward et al., 2004; Ware et al., 2010), though further research is needed to investigate this assertion.

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For Peer Review

### Interview Schedule – Rehabilitative Climate (Prisoners)

#### *Introductory questions*

- Could you tell me a bit about your life in prison...perhaps take me through a typical day.

#### *The prison and prison life*

- What do you think is the main purpose of this prison? Where do your views about the purpose of XXX come from?
- Do you think it differs from other prisons? How and in what ways? Better/worse...
- Could you tell me, from your perspective, about the relationships between prisoners and staff?
- In your view what do you say about the relationship between prisoners and staff here? (Prompts...) What do you think other prisoners would say if I asked them...what about staff views?
- [If you were a prison officer] What sort of relationship would you think it most beneficial to implement for prisoner's rehabilitation?
- From your experience can you think of a time when staff-prisoner relations were at their best? Can you describe this, what was it like?...would this be your ideal? Where would you rate this prison (e.g. close to your ideal?) Are staff concerned about anything in particular about the prisoners here?
- In your view, does this prison produce a safe environment for prisoners? In what way? What do you think staff would say...
- Do you think this prison allows prisoners to use their time constructively? (How and in what ways?) Do you think prisoners have good access to...work, programmes, recreation? What could be improved? What do you think staff would say if I asked them...?
- Can you tell me about prisoner-prisoner relationships – what are they like in this prison? Are they different from previous prisons? **Explore potential sexual behaviour in the prison, any grooming behaviour, explicit sexualised culture**
- What's the best thing about this prison? If you could change one thing about the prison what would it be?

**Treatment and rehabilitation**

- In your view, how effective is this prison at rehabilitating offenders? What makes you say that?
- What do you think staff would say about how effective XXX is...What do you think staff's views are on treatment programmes?
- What are your views on treatment programmes and the benefits of them? Have your views changed since moving to XXX prison? If so in what ways?
- Do you think everyone at the prison has the same view? In what way are some people different? [If same] has it ever been different
- What effect does a focus on treatment programmes have on this prison? (downsides...)
- What are the benefits of being treatment-focused? (questions focusing more on climate/environment – how important is that...)
- In your view what makes an effective rehabilitative prison? *What sort of place is it...what kind of atmosphere does it have*
- How well you do think this prison is preparing you for life back in the community...is there anything this prison could do better?
- 

**Finish**

- Anything else you would like to say?